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Echo Hawk Launches Initiative to Strengthen BIA Law Enforcement Training on Domestic Violence in Indian Country

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Larry Echo Hawk announced today that he has directed the head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Michael S. Black, and the BIA's Deputy Bureau Director for Justice Services, Darren A. Cruzan, to increase the training of BIA and tribal law enforcement officers to aid them as they respond to domestic violence incidents in the tribal communities they serve.

“Violent crime in Indian Country is twice the national average and more than 20 times the national average on some reservations,” Echo Hawk said. “Our records show the majority of calls that Bureau of Indian Affairs and tribal police respond to are related to domestic violence. While our first duty is to prevent crime, I am directing the BIA's Office of Justice Services to better train its officers to address domestic violence issues.”

The U.S. Indian Police Academy in Artesia, N.M., in conjunction with the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) and its Office of State and Local Training and Rural Policing Institute, will dedicate four Domestic Violence Train-the-Trainer Instructor Training Programs to BIA and tribal law enforcement officers.

The training will enhance the officers' skills to help them work more effectively with victims suffering from the physical and emotional effects of domestic violence. The four programs will provide 96 domestic violence subject matter experts to teach the officer trainees in:

- Dynamics of Domestic Violence
- Documentation and collection of evidence
- Report Writing dynamics
- Victim Impact statements

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- Referral to Domestic Violence Shelter or Services
- Referral to Victim Services
- Referral to Victim Witness Advocate
- Case Report
- Testimony in Tribal/Federal Court

The Train-the-Trainer program also will provide subject matter instructors at the local level to promote and enhance the officers' skills with continuous in-service training. In addition, instructors are encouraged to provide community educational opportunities and participate with local domestic violence and sexual assault victims programs.

Through treaties, intergovernmental agreements, statutory laws and case law, the United States has special duties to aid the federally recognized tribes in the provision of law enforcement services.

The Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs has responsibility for helping the Secretary of the Interior to fulfill his trust responsibilities to tribal and individual trust beneficiaries and promoting self-determination and self-governance for the nation's 565 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes. The Assistant Secretary oversees the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), which administers one of two federal school systems.

The Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs is responsible for managing the BIA's day-to-day operations through four offices – Indian Services, Justice Services, Trust Services and Field Operations – which administer or fund tribally based infrastructure, law enforcement, social services, tribal governance, natural and energy resources and trust management programs for the federally recognized tribes through 12 regional offices and 85 agencies.

The BIA Office of Justice Services is responsible for managing the Bureau's law enforcement, corrections and tribal courts programs, either directly in tribal communities or by funding tribally administered programs through contract and grants.

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